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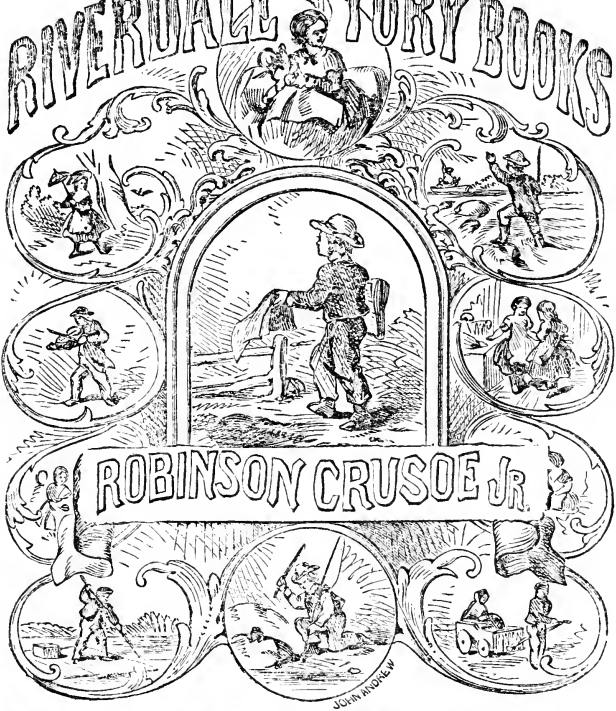

BOSTON, LEE & SHEPARD.

The Riverdale Books.

ROBINSON CRUSOE, JR.

A STORY FOR LITTLE FOLKS.

BY

OLIVER OPTIC,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOAT CLUB," "ALL ABOARD," "NOW OR NEVER," "TRY AGAIN," "POOR AND PROUD," "LITTLE BY LITTLE," &c.

BOSTON:
LEE AND SHEPARD,
(SUCCESSORS TO PHILLIPS, SAMPSON & CO.)
1866.

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ROBINSON CRUSOE, Jr.

I.

Robert Gray was a Riverdale boy, and a very smart one too. Very likely most of my readers will think he was altogether too smart for his years, when they have read the story I have to tell about him.

Robert was generally a very good boy, but, like a great many persons who are older and ought to be wiser than he was, he would sometimes get very queer notions into his head, which made him act very strangely.

He was born on the Fourth of July, which may be the reason why he was so smart, though I do not think it was. He could make boxes and

carts, windmills and water wheels, and ever so many other things.

Behind his father's house there was a little brook, flowing into the river. In this stream Robert had built a dam, and put up a water wheel, which kept turning day and night till a freshet came and swept it into the river.

His father was a carpenter,

and Robert spent a great part of his leisure hours in the shop, inventing or constructing queer machines, of which no one but himself knew the use; and I am not sure that he always knew himself.

On his birthday, when Robert was eleven years old, his oldest brother, who lived in Boston, sent him a copy of Robinson Crusoe as a birthday present. Almost every

child reads this book, and I suppose there is not another book in the world which children like to read so well as this.

It is the story of a man who was wrecked on an island, far away from the main land, and on which no human being lived. The book tells how Robinson Crusoe lived on the island, what he had to eat, and how he obtained it; how

he built a boat, and could not get it into the water, and then built another, and did get it into the water; about his dog and goats, his cat and his parrots, and his Man Friday.

The poor man lived alone for a long time, and most of us would think he could not have been very happy, away from his country and friends, with no one to speak to but his cat and goats, and his Man

Friday, and none of them could understand him.

Robert Gray didn't think so. He read the book through in two or three days after he received it, and thought Robinson Crusoe must have had a nice time of it with his cat and his goats, and his Man Friday.

He was even silly enough to wish himself on a lonely island, away from his father

and mother. He thought he should be happy there in building his house, and roaming over his island in search of food, and in sailing on the sea, fishing, and hunting for shell fish.

Then he read the book through again, and the more he read the more he thought Crusoe was a great man, and the more he wished to be like him, and to live on an

island far away from other people.

"Have you read Robinson Crusoe?" said Robert Gray to Frank Lee, as they were walking home from school one day.

"Yes, three times," replied Frank; and his eyes sparkled as he thought of the pleasure which the book had afforded him.

"Well, I've read it twice,

and I think it is a first-rate book."

"So do I; and I mean to read it again some time."

"How should you like to live like Robinson Crusoe, all alone on an island by yourself?" asked Robert, very gravely.

"Well, I don't know as I should like it overmuch. I should want some of Jenny's doughnuts and apple pies."

"Pooh! who cares for them?" said Robert, with a sneer.

"I do, for one."

"Well, I don't. I would just as lief have oysters and cocoanuts, fish and grapes, and such things."

"Without any butter, or sugar, or molasses?"

"I could get along without them."

"Then there would be great

storms, and you would get wet and be cold."

"I wouldn't mind that."

"Suppose you should be sick — have the measles, the hooping-cough, or the scarlet fever? Who would take care of you then?"

"I would take care of myself."

"Perhaps you could; but I think you would wish your mother was on the island with

you in that case," said Frank, with a laugh.

"I don't believe I should; at any rate, I should like to try it."

"It is all very pretty to read about, but I don't believe I should like to try it. What would you do, Robert, when the Indians came to the island?"

"I would do just as Robinson Crusoe did. I would

shoot as many of them as I could. I would catch one of them, and make him be my Man Friday."

"Suppose they should happen to shoot you instead; and then broil you for their supper? Don't you think you would 'make a dainty dish to set before the king'?"

"I am certain that I could get along just as well as Robinson Crusoe did."

"Perhaps not; every one don't get out of a scrape as easily as Robinson Crusoe did. I know one thing — I shall not go on any desolate island to live as long as I can help it."

"I think I should have a first-rate time on one," said Robert, as he turned down the street which led to his father's house.

The next week the long

summer vacation began, and Robert read Robinson Crusoe through again from beginning to end. He spent almost all his time in thinking about the man alone on the island; and I dare say he very often dreamed about the goats, the cat, the parrot, and Man Friday.

He used to lie for hours together under the great elm tree behind the house fancy-

ing what a famous Crusoe he would make; and wishing he could be cast away upon a lonely island, and there live in a cave, with a cat and a parrot.

It was certainly very silly of him to spend the greater part of his time in dreaming about such things, when he ought to have been thankful for his comfortable and pleasant home, and the com-

pany of his parents, and his brothers and sisters, and for all the good things which God had given him.

Off for the Island.

II.

Robert Gray wanted to be a Robinson Crusoe, and he actually went so far as to form a plan by which he could live on an island, sleep in a cave, and have no companions but a dog and an old cat.

Of course he did not tell any body about this famous

plan, for fear his friends might find it out, and prevent him from becoming a Crusoe. But he went to work, and got every thing ready as fast as he could. He was a smart boy, as I have said before, and his plan was very well laid for a child.

He meant to be Robinson Crusoe, Jr., but he was not quite willing to go upon the island without any tools to

work with, or any thing to eat, after he arrived. I think, if he could, he would have made sure of most of the comforts of life.

Mr. Gray's shop was only a short distance from the river. The little brook in which Robert placed his water wheel, widened into a pretty large stream near the shop. Here Mr. Crusoe, Jr., intended to build a raft, which should bear him to the lonely island.

Near the middle of the great pond, which my young friends will find described in The Young Voyagers, there was a small island, which Robert had chosen for his future home, and where he was to be "monarch of all he surveyed."

After Frank Lee's unfortunate cruise down the river, Robert had some doubts about being able to reach the island.

But these did not prevent him from trying to carry out his plan. He might, perhaps, get wrecked, as Joe Birch had been; but if he did, it would be so much the more like Robinson Crusoe, — only a rock, with the water knee deep upon it, was not a very good place to be "monarch of all he surveyed."

Robert's father and mother had gone to visit his uncle in

the State of New York, and were to be absent two weeks. This seemed like a good time for his great enterprise, as his oldest sister was the only person at home besides himself, and she was too busy to watch him very closely.

He worked away on his raft for two days before he finished it, for he did not mean to go to sea, as he called it to himself, in such a shabby craft as

that in which Joe had been wrecked. He had tools from the shop, a hammer, and plenty of nails, and he made the raft very strong and safe.

It was raised above the water, so that the top was dry when he stood upon it; and to make it more secure, he put a little fence all round it, to prevent him from slipping off if the craft should strike upon a rock.

Then he made two oars with which he could move and steer the raft. He also nailed a box upon the platform, upon which he could sit. When this queer ark was done, he pushed it out into the stream, and made a trial trip as far as the river, and rowed it back to the place from which he started.

From the barn he took two horse-blankets, for his bed on the island, and placed them

on the raft. He got a tin cup and a kettle from the house, as well as several other things which he thought he might need. A small hatchet and some nails from the shop completed his outfit. All these articles were secured on the raft, just before dark, and the next morning he intended to start for the island.

Robert was so tired after the hard work he had done

upon the raft, that he slept like a rock all night, and did not wake up till his sister called him to breakfast. He had intended to start very early in the morning, but this part of his plan had failed.

After breakfast, he took twenty cents which he had saved towards buying a book called The Swiss Family Robinson, which Frank Lee told him was something like Rob-

inson Crusoe, and went to the grocery store to buy some provisions.

He bought a sheet of gingerbread, some crackers, and a piece of cheese, and ran across the fields with them to the brook. He was very careful to keep away from the house, so that his sister should not see him. Having placed these things in the box on the raft, so that they would

be safe, he went back to the house once more.

"Puss, puss, puss," said he; and presently the old black cat came purring and mewing up to him, and rubbing her head against his legs.

Poor pussy had not the least idea that she was destined to be the companion of a Robinson Crusoe; so she let him take her up in his arms. If she had only known what a scrape she

was about to get into, I am sure she would not have let Mr. Crusoe, Jr., put one of his fingers upon her.

"Trip, Trip, Trip, — come here, Trip," said he to the spaniel dog that was sleeping on the door mat.

Trip had no more idea than pussy of the famous plan in which he was to play a part; so he waked up and followed his young master. I don't

believe Trip had any taste for Crusoe life; and he would have liked to know where his beef and bones were to come from, for he was not very fond of gingerbread and crackers.

If pussy didn't "smell a rat" when they reached the raft, it was because there was no rat for her to smell; but she showed a very proper spirit, and, by her scratching

and snarling, showed that she did not like the idea of sailing down the river on a raft.

Robert did not heed her objections; and what do you think he did with poor pussy? Why, he put her in the box with the crackers and gingerbread and cheese! Trip, having a decided taste for the water, did not object to going upon the raft. Yet, judging

from the way he looked up into his master's face, he wondered what was "in the wind," and what big thing was going to be done.

"Now, Trip, we are all ready for a start," said Robert, as he stepped upon the raft. "You needn't scratch and cry so, pussy. Nobody is going to hurt you."

Trip looked up in his face and wagged his tail, and pussy

scratched and howled, and refused to be comforted. But Trip had the advantage of pussy very much in one respect, for, when he became sick of the adventure, he could jump into the water and swim ashore.

Robert, however, gave little thought or heed at this moment to the wishes or comfort of his two companions, for his mind was wholly

taken up with the preparations for the grand departure.

All was now ready; Robert pushed off the raft, and it floated slowly down the stream.

The Water-Wheel.

III.

The river was broad and deep, but Robert was not afraid. He had been on the water a great deal for a little boy, and he was sure that his raft was strong enough to bear a pretty hard knock upon the rocks.

Poor pussy kept up a constant crying, in the box, and

once in a while she scratched, with all her might, against the sides; but she could not get out.

Trip behaved himself much better, but he gazed up in his young master's face all the time, and did not know what to make of this very singular voyage.

Robert was much pleased with his success thus far, and was satisfied that he should

make a very good Robinson Crusoe, Jr. The raft worked quite well, and with the great oar at the stern, he could steer it as easily as though it had been a real boat.

He had not yet reached the dangerous part of the river, which was called the *Rapids*. This was the place where Joe Birch had been wrecked. He had some doubts about being able to pass with safety be-

tween the rocks, which here rose above the surface of the water.

But he was a bold, brave boy, and he was almost sure that, if any thing happened, he could swim ashore.

As he thought of the raft being dashed to pieces against a rock, he wondered what would become of poor pussy.

He did not want to drown her; so he decided to give her

a fair chance to save her life in case of any accident. He opened the box, and pussy was glad enough to get out.

As she jumped from the box, Robert saw that she had made a sad mess of the provisions he had obtained for use on the island. She had scratched open the papers, and the gingerbread was broken into a hundred pieces. The cheese was all mashed up and

ground in with the gingerbread, and the whole mass was well mixed with black hairs from the cat's back.

Robert was so angry when he saw the wreck within the box, that he was tempted to throw pussy overboard for the mischief she had done. But the thought that it was not the cat's fault saved her from a cold bath.

It was not of her own will

that she had taken up her quarters in the box. She did not want to go in there, or stay there after she was in; and all the mischief had been done by her efforts to be free.

Pussy was even more astonished at the prospect around her than the dog, and she jumped from one end of the raft to the other a dozen times, seeking to find some way to escape. She was no

sailor, on the one hand, and did not like her position in the midst of the waters. And she did not like the idea of wetting her soft black coat by swimming ashore, on the other hand.

When she found there was no way to get ashore without taking to the water, she took her stand next to Trip, and began to mew in a most sorrowful manner. The dog

looked at her, and bow-wowed two or three times, as much as to say, "What are you afraid of, pussy? Don't you see I'm not scared?"

Robert went to work upon the contents of the box, to save some of his food, if he could. The hatchet and the nails were covered with soft cheese, and it took him some time to put things in order again.

While he was busy at the box, he did not pay much attention to the raft, and it kept turning round and round, as it floated with the current down the river.

While the little navigator was thus engaged, the raft bumped against something, and Robert sprang to his feet. The whirling craft had run up against the shore, and got aground.

This did not hurt the raft any; but pussy, who had kept both of her sharp eyes fixed upon the land all the time, no sooner saw the vessel touch, than she improved her chance and jumped ashore.

"Pussy, pussy, pussy," called Robert, when he saw that one of his companions had given him the slip.

It was of no use to call her, for she was scampering away

as fast as her nimble feet would carry her in the direction of home. She had no idea of sharing the fortunes of Mr. Robinson Crusoe, Jr., on his lonely island.

"That's real mean—isn't it, Trip?" said he, as he turned to the dog.

But it was very clear that Trip did not think it was mean, for he was in the very act of springing ashore himself.

"Here, Trip. Come here, sir," cried he, as he tried to get hold of the dog's collar.

Trip did not stop to hear any argument on the subject, but, with a long leap, placed himself on the shore. He did not run off, as pussy had done, but stood on the bank of the river, and barked with all his might.

The raft had now floated off a short distance, and Robert

took his oars and rowed it to the shore, for he could not think of such a thing as losing both of his friends, and before he landed on the island.

"Come here, Trip. Poor fellow. Come here, sir," said he, whistling, and patting his knees, to entice the dog to him.

Pushing the raft up a little distance upon the shore, he stepped on the beach to catch

the dog. As he did so, the raft, lightened by the removal of his weight, slid off and went to sea again "on its own hook."

As the loss of his vessel seemed to be a greater misfortune than the loss of the dog, he turned from the latter to recover the former.

The raft floated out about a rod from the shore, and began to go down stream. The

water was quite shallow, and Robert waded in till he got hold of the truant craft; but in attempting to jump upon the platform, he slipped, and went all over into the water.

His courage was good, however, and he managed to pick himself up, and climb upon the raft. The ducking did him no harm; but the day was cool, and his wet clothes did not add to his comfort.

Pulling to the shore again, he fastened the raft to a tree with a rope he had brought for the purpose. Taking off all his clothes, he wrung them as dry as he could, and put them on again.

"Now, come here, Trip," said he to the dog, which had been watching all his movements. "Now we will try again. You needn't try to sneak off, for you are go-

ing with me to the island, any how."

After some coaxing he got near enough to Trip to seize hold of his collar, to which he tied the rope that fastened the raft.

"I didn't think you would be so mean as to run away and leave me, as pussy did," said Robert, as he dragged Trip upon the raft once more. "But you shall go with me

on the voyage, whether you like it or not."

Having secured his prisoner, he pushed off again, and the raft floated slowly down the river. He passed the Rapids in safety, though the raft got two or three pretty hard knocks upon the rocks.

When he reached the pond, he had to take his oars, for the current would not carry him to the island, where he

wished to go. He had to work very hard for as much as an hour, before he could bring the raft to the island. But at last he reached it, and began to feel that he was "monarch of all he surveyed."

Building the House.

IV.

"Now, Trip, we have arrived at our future home. We must go to work and put things to rights," said Robert, as he released the dog, and fastened the raft to a tree.

Trip wagged his tail, and jumped upon the land, as though he entered heartily

into the spirit of the adventure. But I think if Trip could have spoken, and had had the courage to utter his whole mind, he would have said, —

"Young master, you are a fool. What do you want to come here for, where there isn't any body or any thing? You were a great deal better off at home, and I think you are a real silly fellow."

But as Trip could not speak, he didn't say a word; and I am afraid his actions did not express his real feelings, for he looked happy and contented.

Robert's first step after he landed was to explore the island, just as Robinson Crusoe, Senior, had done his domain. He pushed his way, followed by Trip, through the bushes that covered the island.

He wanted to find a cave; but there was not even a rock to be found.

"Well, Trip, I don't see what we shall do for a house," said he, when he returned to the landing-place. "There is, certainly, no cave here. What shall we do, Trip?"

The dog wagged his tail, and barked, as though he understood the question; but he did not mention any way to

overcome the difficulty. Instead of trying to help his master to a plan, he leaped upon the raft, and seated himself on the box.

I dare say this was Trip's notion of their next move,—that Robert should get upon the raft, and make his way home as fast as he could.

"We won't do any thing of the sort, Trip. Do you think I'm going home again?

No, sir. I'm Robinson Crusoe, Jr."

"Bow, wow," replied Trip; which, being interpreted, undoubtedly meant, "Do come along, master. Let us go home."

"No, you don't," said Robert. "Wouldn't the fellows laugh at me if they should find me coming back now! I'll tell you what we'll do, Trip. We can take the boards

in the raft and use them to build a house. That is just the idea. We won't stop to think about it, either, but go to work, and do the job at once, for we want the house to sleep in to-night."

Robert then carried the box and the various articles with which the raft was loaded to the shore, and placed them near the spot where he intended to build his house.

This was just the kind of work that pleased Robert, and he was as much excited as though he were going to Europe, or to do some other great thing. Throwing off his coat, he seized the hatchet and went to work with a zeal that promised soon to give him a house.

The raft was torn in pieces, and the boards and timbers of which it was made carried

to the site of the new dwelling. Robert had hardly finished this part of the job, before a thought struck him.

At the most, his stock of food would not last him more than two or three days; and in his survey of the island he had seen neither grapes nor berries, upon which he had expected to live when the crackers and gingerbread were all gone.

As this thought struck him, he sat down upon the ground, and began to look quite sad. He had destroyed the raft, which it had taken him two days to build. He was acting like a man who locks himself into a prison, and then throws the key out the window.

"I don't know but we are getting into a bad scrape, Trip," said he, as the dog

seated himself in front of him, and looked up into his face as if to ask him what he meant to do next.

Trip wagged his tail, and did not seem to be at all concerned about the future. No doubt he felt able to swim to the main shore.

"But I'm not going to back out now, I can tell you, Trip. I'm going to have a time of it, any how. When I get

back, if I ever do go back, I want to tell the fellows I enjoyed it first rate, and then they can't laugh at me."

It was now nearly noon, and he decided to dine before he began to work on the house. Opening the box, he took out some crackers and cheese; and while he ate himself, he gave Trip his full share. Robert had worked hard, and was very hungry; and Trip,

like any other dog, was always hungry. The dinner they ate, therefore, made a large hole in the stock of food.

After the meal, they went down to the bank to take a drink. Robert took up a dipper of water, and tried to drink it, but it was so brackish that a very little satisfied him.

By this time he had begun

to feel some of the hardships of Crusoe life. Crackers and cheese were not very dainty fare to a boy who had been used to living upon beefsteak and hot biscuit; and river water was not at all like tea and coffee, or even the water of his father's well.

In spite of these difficulties, Robert went to work like a hero, and by sunset, he had finished his house so far as

he could, for his stock of boards fell short when he had covered the top and one side of the dwelling.

While he was so busy he had not kept watch of Trip, and the glutton had gone to the box in which the gingerbread and crackers were kept, and eaten all he could of them. What he could not eat, he had munched up, till a decent pig would have refused to touch it.

"Trip, Trip. Come here, Trip, you rascal," cried Robert, angry enough to kill the dog, if he had been near.

Trip did not answer to the call; in fact, after he had eaten all he could, he quietly slipped into the water and swam to the main shore.

Robert sat down, and actually wept with vexation. Every thing was spoiled by the unfeeling conduct on the part

of Trip. There was not even enough for his supper left, though his hunger made him partake of some of the cleanest of the mess.

The sun set, and the darkness gathered around him. He now crawled into his new house, and rolled himself up in his blanket; but it was very gloomy, and he was cold and tired. How different from his father's kitchen!

Robert began to think what a fool he was, and wished himself at home with all his heart. He wondered what his sister thought had become of him. Of course she had missed him before this time, and very likely she was then searching for him in the village. Perhaps the people would make just such a fuss as they did when Frank Lee was lost.

He had not thought of this before, and he felt sorry that he had caused his sister so much pain and anxiety as his absence would occasion.

As he shivered with cold, he came to the conclusion that it was not so pleasant, after all, to be a Robinson Crusoe. The book was all very well as a story, but it was not the life he cared to live.

He was so cold, he could not go to sleep. I suppose some of the boys who read this will ask why he did not make a fire. There was a very good reason. He had put a bunch of matches into his pocket in the morning, but when he fell into the water they had been completely soaked, and not one of them would "go."

Hour after hour he lay there,

shivering and weeping, till at last he fell asleep, so worn out that he could endure no more. Do you suppose he dreamed of Crusoe in his cave, with his dog and his parrot?

It is more likely that he dreamed of his warm bed at home; of hot biscuit and new milk, of apple pie and doughnuts. But after he had slept an hour or two, he was

awakened by loud calls on the pond.

He was terrified by the sounds, and perhaps thought, at first, that the savages were coming to have a feast on the island; but I am sure he had no wish to procure a Man Friday from their number.

The noise was made by a party who were searching for the young Crusoe. For several hours the fears of his

sister had filled her with agony. Some one told her that her brother had been making a raft, and she called upon the neighbors to explore the river.

She feared that he had been drowned, for no one thought of such a thing as that he had turned Crusoe. It was possible he had gone ashore, and got lost; so the people took boats and went down

the river, searching closely on their way.

They were looking for the raft, and had been down to the dam below without finding it. On their way down they had shouted all the time; but Robert slept so soundly that he did not hear them.

On their return they went nearer to the island, and their cries had roused him from his uneasy slumber. Robert heard

them call his name, and his fears vanished.

"Halloo!" he shouted in reply.

"Where are you?" asked one of the men in the boat.

"On the island."

In a moment more, the boat touched the shore, where Robinson Crusoe, Jr., shivering with cold, was waiting for them.

"What in the world are

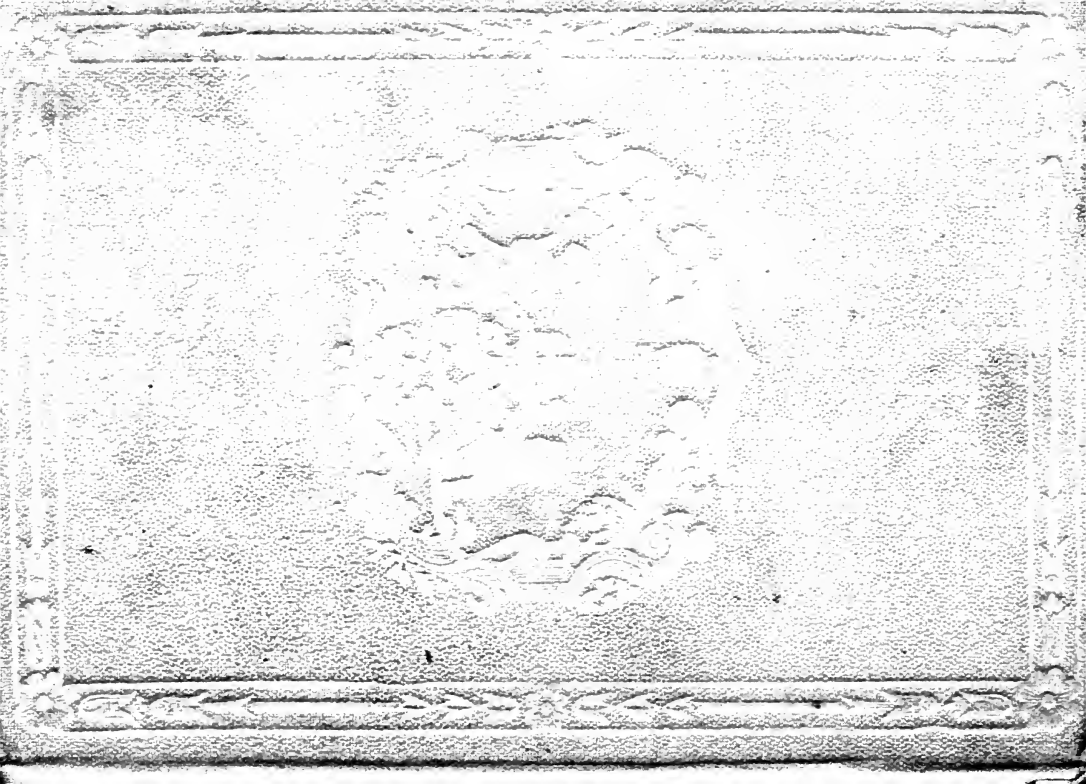
you doing here? Where is your raft?" asked Mr. Green, who was in the boat.

"I pulled it to pieces, for I meant to stay here and be a Robinson Crusoe," answered Robert.

The men laughed at the idea, and Robert began to cry again. Finding that Crusoe felt badly, Mr. Green told the men not to laugh at him. So they wrapped him up in

his blankets, and taking the rest of his things into the boat, they rowed back to Riverdale.

Robert's sister was glad enough to see him, so she did not scold him much; but for a long time afterwards the boys in the village called him Robinson Crusoe, Jr.

He never wanted to live on a desolate island again, and said no more about try-

ing to catch a Man Friday. On the contrary, the adventure caused him to love his parents and his home more than ever before.